

**Confidential**\* \* \* \* \*

Afak, Iraq, February 17, 1961

The next day, a Sunday for us, is the second day of the Baghdad business week. The party previously mentioned plus Mrs. Theodore Tieken and her daughter Nancy, friends of the Institute from Chicago, planned to go to Afak in the afternoon having acquired their travel permits the previous morning. Could I pay my courtesy calls at the Department of Antiquities, get my residence and travel permits, and be ready to leave for Afak together with the others? With this incentive I appeared at the Directorate General at 9:00. I got off to a flying start with a conversation of more than an hour with Sayid Fuad Safar. It was 11:00 before I was ready to go to the residence office, letters having been prepared during our talk, far from the Department. After an hour the residence permit was completed. A trip by taxi to the opposite end of Baghdad several miles away was necessary to reach the travel permit office. It was after 12:00 before we arrived, but in twenty minutes the permit was finished giving me permission for one journey to Afak! (To leave Afak it is necessary to get another permit to return to Baghdad. The reason for all the permits, of course, is the government's concern about the safety of its foreign guests.) Once more back at the Department I paid my respects to the Director General Sayid Taha Baqir who had been at the university in the morning, to Dr. Basmachi, Curator of the Iraq Museum, to Sayid Antran, the Department's excellent photographer. After a second appearance in Sayid Fuad's office at 2:00 I had completed the essential formalities. Back at the Zia Hotel about 45 minutes later, but without lunch, an unimportant detail after a morning of tea drinking, I was occupying a seat in one of the two taxis taking us to Afak. Five hours earlier I had entertained small hopes of making it.

The road from Baghdad to Diwaniyeh is a sheer delight when compared to former days. This stretch is new asphalt and is still in excellent condition. In little more than an hour after departure from the Zia we arrived at Babylon where we stopped to get a quick view of the restoration work in progress there. Near completion is a new Ishtar Gate half the size of the original. Much of the Procession Street has been cleared and portions repaved. A new structure is rising on the foundations of the Hanging Gardens. Such work as this is an effort on the part of the Iraq Government to make its more important ancient sites attractive to tourists. Similar work is in progress, or has been done, at Ur, Aqarquf, Harmel, Nineveh, Nimrud, and Hatra.

In Hillah our travel permits were inspected for the first time. While in this process one of the rear tires on the red taxi had to be repaired. The delay afforded us an opportunity to have our afternoon tea beside the muddy waters of the Hillah branch of the Euphrates. Upon entering Diwaniyeh the travel permits were requested a second time. Upon leaving Diwaniyeh on the dirt road leading to Afak a soldier emerged from a tent beside the way and looked into the cars. When he saw that the party included the American archaeologists in Afak, the cars were waved on without dragging out the travel permits for a third time.

At 7:30 we reached the expedition house in Afak, the house where for the past two seasons the owner has simply moved out, in order to rent it to us. Twenty-four hours after my arrival in Iraq I was in Afak! This is for me, at least, a quick departure from Baghdad to the field.

How did the dig look to me after an absence of three years? Somehow I had expected the excavated area to be somewhat deeper and smaller in extent. Level IX which had gone on for a depth of two meters was at an end. Two days later its walls were being removed. At this juncture it may be well to mention the levels as we commonly refer to them here (these do not correspond in level numbers with the report in Archaeology XII), the period, and the extent of each.

<u>Level</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Temple Area Extent</u>
VII	Early Dynastic III/II	25 meters wide x 85 meters long. It was with this level that the season began.
VIII	Early Dynastic II	16 meters wide x 40 meters long. This may be longer because the full extent to the north has not been excavated. The reduction in width from 25 to 16 meters, however, is certain.
IX	Early Dynastic I	13 meters wide x 30 meters long. This is the extent at the highest part of the two meters of existence of this level.

<u>Level</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Temple Area Extent</u>
X	Early Dynastic I	11 meters wide x 13 meters. The lowest level if IX was this size. Level X is only 60-75 cms. in thickness.
XI	Early Dynastic I	The size is not yet known because it is appearing only in spots. The plan is different than X. The bricks are still plano-convex, however, and this fact alone is our basis for calling it ED I at the moment.

From this resume one can see the dramatic reduction in size from the grandiose ED temple of Level VII with which we began the season. Although the size of the Level VIII temple is somewhat reduced from VII, the two separate cellae in VIII, one with a bent-axis and the other direct, remain essentially the same in plan as those of VII. In Level IX the two separate cellae have disappeared. There is a rearrangement with a big cella complete with altar, bench, and high platform. A second and smaller "holy of holies," if one so wishes to designate it, is attained by going through a door to the right of the altar in the big cella. A more detailed description comes from Mr. Haines' Report No. 7 dated February 15:

"In the cella an altar stands against the east wall. In its front face there is a vertical V groove which continues in the floor in a slight curve to a vertical drain. The groove approximately bisects a semi-crescent apron in front of the altar so that it represents a pair of horizontal "horns" raised slightly above the floor level. The altar continues unchanged, except for its many replasterings, during the entire level. Near the southeast corner of the room a bin-like enclosure, which has a stepped pedestal incorporated in its west wall, projects from the southern wall. Later, the bin was filled to the top of the pedestal and three dished-floor niches lined the west part of the enclosure. In the later phase of the temple, the bin-like enclosure grows into a raised platform with a semi-cylindrical ridge at its western edge. The ridge terminates in a semi-circular table (?) and a vertical, slightly tapering mud plaster post or shaft built around what appears to have been a wood core. The shaft, now fallen, originally stood approximately 50 cms. above the rest of the construction. The vertical white stripes painted on the wall plaster, mentioned in the last report, are also found on enough of the earlier wall plasterings to indicate that it was a decorative wall treatment used throughout the period. However, the earliest plastering on the altar is unpainted.

"In the small room behind the cella, there are two small stepped altars and two domed offering (?) tables. Their shapes become coarsened by repeated replasterings and, in the later phase, the smaller altar disappears entirely. It is replaced by an offering table attached to the larger altar. At this time there is a vertical V groove in the altar front which continues in the floor to a small sunken pot near the two offering tables. In the northwest corner of the room, three inverted cups or vases are in situ on still another



offering table. The walls of the room are decorated in a manner similar to those in the main cella."

In Level X the small room of IX disappears and is incorporated into the service area of the cella. The dimension of the cella in which no recognizable altar has been found in X, namely, 4.50-5.00 m. x 4.50-5.00 m., with no sign of posts or pillars indicate that the cella area was open. These dimensions, very similar to those of IX, are too great for spanning with the kind of wood beams available, namely, date palm logs. The big cella in IX and the only one in X must have been without roof.

Outside of the pottery the objects in Level IX are hardly worth mentioning. Level X is also extremely poor. It would seem, therefore, that we must wait until the Jamdat Nasr or Uruk periods before we can expect further objects of noteworthy caliber, if indeed, the Inanna Temple continues into these levels.

As for the statuettes, votive plaques, statue bases (?), inscribed and uninscribed stone bowls found in November, they are even nicer than Mr. Haines indicated in his earlier letters. They have been a great drawing card for visitors from Baghdad especially since the good roads allow the trip from Baghdad to Afak to be made in three and one-half hours. The United States Ambassador Mr. John D. and Mrs. Jerne-gan, the British Ambassador Sir Humphrey and Lady Trevelyan, and the Swiss Charge d'Affaires Mr. Sigifred and Mrs. Marcuard have been among the many who have come. I feel certain that no visitor has been disappointed either in the excavation itself or in the objects which came from it. By this time, however, most of you have seen the first news pictures which appeared in the February 3 issue of Time and still another scheduled for appearance in Life for March 31.

The inscribed material is limited to the writing on about 25 stone bowls and statuettes and to a similar number of clay tablets and fragments. Professor Goetze has examined copies of the inscriptions from the stone objects prepared by Dr. George Dales and due to the fact that many of the personal names appear in the Fara texts has concluded that these inscriptions are more like those of Fara than any others. Of the 25 clay tablets and fragments only two are complete. The writing on all of the others is damaged or partially destroyed. The oven which we used to bake tablets three years ago had been destroyed when we returned this season and the few tablets discovered do not warrant our building a new one. Accordingly we have cleaned these unbaked tablets and fragments as carefully as possible. As a result the reading of the tablets will not be impaired by lack of sufficient cleaning but only by the difficulty of the texts themselves. One fragment coming from Parthian fill outside our digging area belongs to an Assyrian cylinder of which several duplicates were found in earlier seasons. All other pieces, however, are Early Dynastic. Of these one of the complete tablets bears a simple dedicatory inscription of the type usually found on stone bowls, etc.; the others are economic.

Yesterday Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, began. During this period when strict Muslims do not eat between sunrise and sundown we, by law, cannot work the men more than seven hours per day. Accordingly our work schedule is now from 7:00-11:00 A.M. and from 12:00-3:00 P.M. During the month, therefore, the loss of one hour per day for each man means the loss of three man days for each man for the month plus a three day holiday after the conclusion of Ramadan. We hope that the shorter day plus the holidays will give our workmen renewed strength for the final assault on the Inanna temple after the end of this fasting period!

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